DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 396 407 EA 027 636

AUTHOR Evans, Thomas J.
TITLE Transformational Leadership and Supervision: Promoting Reflective Inquiry in Schools.
PUB DATE May 96
NOTE 18p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Principles; Elementary Education; Intermediate Grades; *Leadership; Leadership Qualities; *Leadership Styles; *Supervision; *Supervisory Methods; Teacher Administrator Relationship; *Teacher Improvement; Teacher Motivation

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a transformational philosophy of educational leadership, with a focus on the practice of supervision. The paper defines and outlines the purposes of both leadership and supervision. It discusses multilevel social forces that affect leadership for K-8 schools and examines four dimensions of leadership--knowing oneself, the followership, the task, and the situation. The four dimensions of supervision include knowing one's supervisory beliefs, helping followers to know themselves, helping followers to know the tasks, and helping followers to know the situation. In general, supervision is an ongoing interactive process intended to improve teacher instruction and student learning. Supervision aims to affect individuals' higher order needs and activities. The main process indicator identifying transformative supervisors is the extent to which reflective inquiry is demonstrated among their staffs. (Contains 18 references.) (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 396 407

Transformational Leadership and Supervision: Promoting Reflective Inquiry in Schools

by

Thomas J. Evans

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

T. Evans

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
May 1996

EA 027 636

Introduction

This paper presents a philosophy of educational leadership from a transformational perspective highlighting, in particular, the activity of supervision. Definitions and purposes for both leadership and supervision are presented. A final section discusses supervision as carried out by a transformational leader. School buildings in the K-8 grade range are the context in which this philosophical discussion is grounded. A discussion of multilevel social forces and interactions that impact upon this context are also included.

What Is Leadership?

Leadership is a multidimensional activity involving many interpersonal, intrapersonal, and situational interactions sometimes occurring simultaneously. To clarify the concept of leadership, its four general dimensions will be examined. Hodgkinson (1991) presented a scheme for classifying four leadership dimensions as knowing: (1) oneself; (2) the followership; (3) the task; and (4) the situation. This classification scheme will be used in this paper.

First Dimension: Knowing Oneself

To know oneself, one must articulate a definition of leadership, state the purpose for which leadership is engaged, and identify one's underlying core values. Bronowski (1965) stated that "there exists a single creative activity, which is displayed alike in the arts and in the sciences" (p. 27), and

while the act of creation is original it does not stop with the originator because: "The act of appreciation re-enacts the act of creation, and we are (each of us) actors, we are interpreters of it" (p. 27). If creativity can hold such essential importance across the arts and sciences, creativity must also play a central role in educational leadership whereby followers' lives are deeply touched as they attempt to appreciate, to recreate if you will, the leader's vision.

Burns (1978) conceptualized transformational leadership as that which "occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (p. 20). However, Burns cautioned that this engagement encompasses more than being a moralist; he stated that "the one who deals with both [analytical and normative ideas] and unites them through disciplined imagination is an intellectual" (p. 141), and that "Intellectual leadership is *transforming* leadership" (p. 142). Thus, transformational leadership must be an expression of both intellectual and moral reasoning.

Morality impacts leadership when, as Pondy (1978) suggested, the research focus on leadership shifts from a positivistic approach centered on observing followers' compliant behavior to a substantive approach where the efficient leader strives "not to change behavior but to give others a sense of understanding what they are doing, and especially to articulate it so they can communicate about the meaning of their behavior" (p. 94). Starratt (1993) described leadership as:

> ... exercised not so much by scientific management as by guarding essential values of the culture, by reminding people in the organization of the essential meanings of the culture, by promoting rituals and celebrations which sustain those essential meanings and values of the organization (p. 5).

Thus, educational leadership as a human activity is, in part, a morally creative process. The conceptual reach of leadership goes inward touching our core values and outward to include our

cultural values. Therefore, a definition of leadership should have a moral basis and emphasize the powerful role of creativity in building organizations, particularly schools, that enable the development of the full range of human potential for those involved. For this paper, leadership is defined as a creative process of engagement between at least two individuals who raise one another to higher levels of motivation, morality, and human potential through successful completion of organizational tasks.

The purpose of educational leadership follows from this definition. In general, the leader's mission is to facilitate the creation of functionally better schools represented by learning communities. To do so, the leader must be both the visionary and primary change agent implementing the ideals of the vision into institutional practice. After constructing a vision, the leader must communicate it among the followership capitalizing on the rare capacity Pondy (1978) described as going public with sense making that involved "putting very profound ideas in very simple language" (p. 95). In essence, the educational leader should conceptualize a vision for schools that places equal value upon enhancing the development of all members' human potential as much as meeting the school's goals. A distinguishing quality of the leader, wrote Starratt (1993), is a passionate commitment to making the dynamic reconstruction of social life better for everyone involved in the organization. The leader's challenge, then, contended Starratt, is "to create an institutional environment in which both the employees and the clients experience something approaching that sense of personal importance and dignity which are experienced in the home and neighborhood" (p. 40).

Second Dimension: Knowing The Followership

Hodgkinson (1991) advised that the leader "must get to know the followers, with insight if not with intimacy" (p. 61) and recognize the individual "as being at base intrinsically valuable, an end-in-himself" (p. 133). To know another person, the leader must consider three dimensions comprising each individual. Sergiovanni (1992b) described the three aspects making up an individual as the heart, head, and hand. The heart is the philosophical dimension of a person; it is one's substantive composition including their values and beliefs. The head represents how the individual thinks conditioned upon a prior filtration of information by the person's heart (philosophical dimension). One only sees reality as one's philosophical dimension allows which in turn determines the theories, methods, and strategies by which one operates socially. The hand refers to the operationalization of the head's directives. When making these inferences about teachers, the leader should recognize their tentative nature since teachers all undergo adult life transitions and may be at certain stages in their human development simply as a result of aging.

At times, the leader may need to influence followers' existing personal and organizational world views to successfully implement an organizational vision. Argyris (1976) postulated a general process of enlightenment and change through individuals' reflection called double-loop learning. Such reflection produces feedback that individuals use to rethink and revise their personal and organizational world views and, thereby, become more committed to the vision. Using intrapersonal conflict in the form of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) and organizational conflict as a creative tension (Senge, 1990), the leader challenges members to rethink their personal and organizational world views in light of inconsistencies between values and behavior. By valuing the development of

a wide range of each member's potential, the leader taps the follower's intrinsic motivation to engage in personal growth and commit to change.

Third Dimension: Knowing The Task

To achieve the purposes of the school's vision, the effective educational leader must closely unite the needs and values of the school collectivity with its individual constituents: community representatives, teachers, and students. "To make these interests [individuals' goals] converge upon the goals of the collectivity is to accomplish the core task of leadership" (Hodgkinson 1991, p. 67).

To foster convergence upon the goals of the school collectivity by community representatives, the leader should seek their participative input to shape school policy. Parents' input should especially be welcomed since they and their children are primary stakeholders in the educational process. Moreover, if the leader were to ask parents and community groups such as businesses or social service agencies to reach consensus on the values they would like emphasized in school, they would most likely identify the values generally associated with the "honorable life" such as personal importance and dignity -- the same values as transformational leaders suggested in this paper. Hence, community groups' involvement in school procedures should be encouraged as a way to cement an important bond with the school that has great implications for student achievement.

To maximize teachers' interests in the school organization, the leader should assist all teachers in making better instructional decisions to improve student learning. The leader should restructure teachers' work relationships to encourage collaboration and cooperation by means of team teaching, mentorship programs, and mutually scheduled planning periods. The leader should also provide

teachers with opportunities for experiential learning to promote their continuous learning. Activities that would accomplish this include visits to exemplary schools, in-service demonstrations, conference presentations, action research, and grant writing. These activities would result in greater student learning too, since "effective teachers think about what they are currently doing, assess the results of their practice, and explore with each other new possibilities for teaching students" (Glickman 1990, p. 55).

To align student interests with the school's values, teachers would demonstrate their belief that all students can learn. While each student would be met at his or her own ability level, high expectations for learning would also be evident. Instruction would focus less on letter grades and more upon ensuring that assignments were challenging enough to raise anxiety levels for learners, but not to the point of inducing disengagement. Ultimately, students would be judged against a criterion standard concerning decisions of graduation, yet over time, students' natural learning trajectories and diverse learning styles would have been honored rather than demanding that all students master the same material by the same point in time through the same pedagogical means. Such pedagogical flexibility and personal consideration for each learner would be the best assistance in preparing each child for future success and eventual graduation.

Fourth Dimension: Knowing The Situation

The institution of education serves a special purpose for individuals and society. Concerning the individual, Hodgkinson (1991) stated that "The human condition and the quality of life are inextricably dependent on the educational institution and its component organizations" (p. 45). In

a Lamarckian fashion (Gould, 1980), the institution serves society by passing on to the next generation the desired societal values, culture, and skills. Thus leaders must be aware of the locally operating mores and folkways.

Local communities inescapably hold and actively perpetuate certain values. A community has a sense of the type of person it wants its schools to graduate. Responsible leaders must be aware of these values and respect them when engaging in vision-making. Hence, leaders must deal not only with interests of community representatives, teachers, and students, but also of local community's need to perpetuate a culturally familiar school experience to transfer certain desired values and skills to the next generation.

As a result, leaders are necessarily enmeshed in multi-level interactions with various interest groups as they move the organization closer towards realizing its vision. Throughout the entire process, leaders must demonstrate well developed political skills for solving novel problems that arise, be adept at consensus building, and effectively cultivate as positive feedback the conflict generated from the continuous learning of group members.

What Is Supervision?

Supervision, like leadership, is a complex theoretical construct composed of multiple dimensions. Supervision, a subconstruct of leadership, serves a critical support function for effective leadership. Extending Hodkinson's (1991) scheme for leadership to supervision, the four dimensions of supervision addressed below are: (1) knowing one's supervisory beliefs; (2) helping followers know themselves; (3) helping followers know the task; and (4) helping followers know the situation.

First Dimension: Knowing One's Supervisory Beliefs

In order to claim knowledge of what supervision is, leaders must articulate their beliefs concerning appropriate supervisory behavior. They must also be able to define supervision and state its purpose.

Current supervisory practices seem to be slowly evolving a holistic, normative basis from what was once a directive process serving a bureaucratic function. Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993) described this redefinition to include "the disconnection of supervision from hierarchical roles and a focus on community as the primary metaphor for schooling" (p. xviii). The community metaphor implies that traditional supervision could and ought to be replaced with a system of widespread, commonly shared values. Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993) argued that professional socialization, shared purposes and values, and building natural dependencies among teachers are able to provide a form of normative power that will encourage teachers to meet their commitments.

Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993) conceptually defined supervision as "a process designed to help teachers and supervisors learn more about their practice; to be better able to use their knowledge and skills to better serve parents and schools; and to make the school a more effective learning community" (p. 38). This conceptual definition contains a key element that a normative type of supervision should embody, namely, a focus on continuous learning to stimulate continuous improvement of practice.

Glickman (1990) points out that through reflective practice and interaction the purposes of supervision are achieved. He wrote:

> ... supervision works to break up the routine, lack of career stages,

> and isolation of teaching and to promote intelligent, autonomous, and collective reason in order to establish a cause beyond oneself and to shape a purposeful and productive body of professionals achieving common goals for students (p. 40).

Second Dimension: Helping Followers Know Themselves

Glickman (1990) suggested that the challenge for the supervisor is to treat teachers as individual adult learners enabling greater use of their potential to serve students and the school. Teachers in successful schools are challenged to extend the use of their mental abilities. If supervisors promoted reflective thinking among the school staff, school effectiveness might not be far behind. "Thinking improves when people interact with each other, when they break routine by experimenting, when they observe others at work, and when they assess and revise their own actions" (Glickman 1990, p. 56).

More recently, Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993) emphasized the need for teachers to be cognizant of their implicit beliefs, opinions, values, and attitudes, and called for teachers to make them explicit through written platforms. Through this process, leaders as supervisors would gain insights into what a teacher's platform position is, the relationship between his or her teaching practices and platform elements, and inconsistencies between the teacher's platform and practice. The feedback gained by knowing a teacher's platform would allow leaders to affect personal and professional improvements. Knowing a teacher's platform can provide a common language and understanding between leaders and the teachers from which may emerge new insights into their teaching practices and new possibilities for student learning.

Argyris (1976) described the general process of enlightenment and change through reflection as double-loop learning. Double-loop learning confronts basic assumptions behind ideas, publicly tests hypotheses, and disconfirms flawed processes. For example, teachers should be encouraged to articulate their professional practices, goals, purposes, etc. and confront them in light of their actions to alter inconsistent positions. In this way, individuals are asked to truly reflect on the information guiding their present behavior and question it. The adoption of a new position based on the most information possible would result in individuals' greater internal commitment.

Third Dimension: Helping Followers Know The Task

The general task for teachers within schools is to offer the best instruction possible to maximize student learning. To do so, teachers must continually upgrade their talents for creating quality learning situations for students. Instructional improvement can be thought of as "helping teachers acquire teaching strategies that increase the capabilities of students to make wise decisions in varying contexts" (Glickman 1990, p. 82).

The leader helps teachers acquire better teaching strategies by promoting programs intended to develop professional inquiry skills for all teachers -- novices and veterans. These programs include professional reflective activity (Cliff, Holland, & Veal, 1990); collaboration in any one of many forms such as interdisciplinary teams, site based management plans, or teacher and university researcher field based studies; action research (Noffke & Zeichner, 1987) which stresses the value of developing good habits in observing and critiquing teaching practice early in one's career; clinical supervision (Cogan, 1973) that emphasizes open communication upon teaching practices; and coaching (Joyce

& Showers, 1982) in which fellow teachers observe one another trying out newly learned teaching models.

By promoting professional inquiry among teachers, supervisors effectively shift the task of supervision from themselves externally located to teachers' own internal control. Teachers will continue to grow professionally because the intrinsic rewards felt from learning will stimulate their next cycle of reflection producing more knowledge. For teaching as a collaborative process to produce these results, supervision must be normatively based with professional and moral authority as its driving forces. As Sergiovanni (1992a) asserted, "Supervision would then emerge from within educators rather than being externally imposed, ending forever supervision as we now know it" (p. 205).

Fourth Dimension: Helping Followers Know The Situation

The leader's general concern is to develop his school building into a learning community situated within the wider context of the general community. The vision guiding this mission should, as Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993) suggested:

> ... create a value framework that enables daily, routine activities to take on a special meaning and significance, making the school a *special* place, instilling feelings of ownership, identity, participation, and moral fulfillment (p. 195).

To realize that vision, the leader must take deliberate steps to redefine institutional relationships among community members, teachers, and students. Community members, like teachers, should have greater input into decision making concerning the school's operations.

However, community members, like teachers, have probably not been trained in the crucial skills of group participative decision making or conflict resolution. Either directly or indirectly, the leader would have to provide them the appropriate training. Additionally, the leader will have to raise the entire community's consciousness concerning the philosophy of participative decision making or run the risk of community members interpreting reform efforts as simply an activity for teachers without genuine regard for students.

The leader should take steps to discover and unlock the potential locked within schools as typically structured. By increasing decision making for teachers, their roles and attitudes will change. Their increased involvement will lead to increased ownership of decisions and a deeper feeling of caring (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993). As more active participants in the educational process, they will hone their pedagogical skills through experimentation and reflection.

The primary benefit of empowering teachers will be increased student learning. As teachers experience personal and professional renewal through continuous learning, an attitude would transfer to students that they are ultimately responsible for their own learning. Students would be regarded as the primary "customers" of the educational process and discover the enriching quality of knowledge through relevant learning tasks under a student-as-worker metaphor.

Supervision As a Transformational Leader

Leadership and supervision are complex, multidimensional constructs with leadership comprised, in part, of supervisory functions. In order to effectively lead an educational organization, the leader must know himself, the followership, the task at hand, and the general situation in which

the task is embedded. As an educational supervisor, the leader's focus becomes more narrowly centered on concerns for effective teaching and increased learning. To perform well in this role, the leader as a supervisor must know his supervisory beliefs, and how to help the followers know themselves, their task at hand, and the general situation in which the task is embedded.

The integration of leadership and supervision takes on a normative nature and can best be thought of as transformational supervision. As supervisors, leaders maintain their transformational leadership orientation, but focus their actions upon a certain subset of leader responsibilities. In general, supervision is an ongoing interactive monitoring process intended to improve teacher instruction and student learning. Supervision is formative in nature which begins following the leader's wide dissemination of a clearly articulated vision. Writing summative evaluations is not within the realm of activities for a transformational supervisor, but rather for the leader occupying a more generalized role. Likewise, the transformational supervision is not in evidence when principals work to resolve legal or budget issues that, nevertheless, indirectly impact on teaching and learning. In general, transformational supervisors aim to affect individuals' higher order needs and motivation.

The main process indicator identifying effective transformational supervisors is the extent to which reflective inquiry is demonstrated among their staffs informing professional practice and enabling better service to all educational stakeholders. In practice, teachers will transfer that methodology to their classrooms with the effect of increasing students' reflective inquiry skills and subsequent learning. This process is consistent with the values of transformational leadership emphasizing personal importance and genuine human dignity. Through reflective inquiry techniques, the effective transformational supervisor enables teachers to vision alternate methods for delivering instruction, thereby transforming less effective instructional experiences for students into richer

learning opportunities.

Finally, as attempts are made to restructure the school's organization, the school leader must confront various societal forces that impact on effective teaching and learning. This is the point at which leaders' expertise as politicians as well as an educators are challenged as they deal with financial and legal challenges, student discipline, and issues of diversity (to mention only a few). Leaders' success in expeditiously resolving these confrontations will significantly determine the amount of time available for them as transformational supervisors to creatively stimulate the evolution of bureaucratic school structures into genuine learning communities.

Summary

Leadership and supervision are complex processes requiring the leader to interact with various individuals and groups across multiple social dimensions. A vision must be morally based extolling the virtues of developing the full range of each group member's human potential. As transformational supervisors, the leader must focus upon promoting reflective inquiry among the staff, students, and themselves. By constantly examining professional practices and identifying structural impediments thwarting school improvement, a school can increasingly develop into a learning community.

References

Argyris, C. (1976). Increasing leadership effectiveness. Malabar: Krieger Publishing Company.

Bronowski, J. (1965). Science and human values. New York: Harper & Row.

Burns, G. M. (1978). Leadership. New York: Harper & Row.

Clift, R., Holland, P. and Veal, M. (1990). School context dimensions that affect staff development, Journal of Staff Development, 11, 34-38.

Cogan, M. (1973). Clinical supervision. Boston: Houghton Mifflen.

Festinger, L. (1957). A theory of cognitive dissonance. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Glickman, C. D. (1990). Supervision of instruction. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Gould, S. J. (1980). The pandas's thumb. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Hodgkinson, C. (1991). Educational leadership. New York: State University of New York.

Joyce, B., and Showers, B. (1982). The coaching of teaching. Educational Leadership, 40, (1) 4-10.

Noffke, S. and Zeichner, K. (1987). Action Research and teacher thinking: the first phase of the Action Research Project at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, D.C.

Ownes, R. G. (1991). Organizational behavior in education. (4th Ed.), Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Pondy, L. R. (1978). Leadership is a language game. In McCall, M. W. and Lombardo, M. M. (Ed.), Leadership: Where else can we go? (pp. 87-99). Durham: Duke University Press.

Senge, P. M. (1990). The leader's new work: Building learning organization's. Sloan Management Review, 32, Fall 1990.

Sergiovanni, T. J. & Starratt, R. J. (1993). Supervision: A redefinition. (5th ed.). New York: Mc Graw-Hill.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992a). Moral authority and the regeneration of supervision. In Glickman, C. D. (Ed.) Supervision in transition, Alexandria: ASCD.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992b). Moral leadership. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Starratt, R. J. (1993). The drama of leadership. Bristol, PA: Falmer Press.